



Sign on bench at bus stop voices backers' feelings toward merger that would extend UTA's bus service to Provo-Orem area.

Business leaders back bus agency merger

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The quarter-cent sales-tax increase would cost the average family of four about \$22 a year, Kemp said.

If the merger and sales-tax increase are approved by Provo and Orem voters, 20 buses could be operating in the area by January. Another 20 buses and a service center would follow within five years, Kemp said.

All of the buses would have lifts for the mobility impaired.

The populations of Provo and Orem combine to make the area the biggest in the Western United States without a mass-transit system, Kemp said.

If the merger is approved by voters, UTA must buy the road rights of Harry Hardman, owner of two buses now running in the city.

"We've talked to Harry, and he is not opposed to selling his rights to us," Kemp said.

Kemp and other members of the TTA board have organized a committee called "Citizens for Public Transit in Provo and Orem." They will solicit endorsements for the proposal.

"I figured something like this would happen soon," Hardman said.

Bus routes have been outlined by UTA officials and include an express route to Salt Lake City.

The proposed routes are set up so 85

percent of the Provo and Orem population will be within a quarter-mile of a bus stop.

If the election fails, UTA will foot the bill for the election, research, surveys and work on the project so far, and TTA will continue as an independent authority, with no taxing power.

"If it fails we might try for it again, but with a lot less enthusiasm," TTA board member Gareth Seastrand said.

Utah Count

Some community leaders support bus

By Gina Caldwell

Deseret News correspondent

PROVO — While the City Council will not take a stand on Provo and Orem joining the Utah Transit Authority, several community leaders back the proposal.

That question, and the quarter-cent sales tax increase that would help fund the mass-transit system, will be before Provo and Orem voters during the primary election Aug. 21.

Provo Councilman Gary Golightly said voters will have to make that decision, and the council will attempt to inform residents, which means it should have an unbiased approach.

"We do feel it is the responsibility of the city to get the information about mass transit out to the public so they can make an informed decision about it," Golightly said.

A newsletter with information on the issue will be sent to Provo residents next week.

Joining the Utah Transit Authority, which operates buses in Salt Lake, Davis and Weber counties, would actually be a merger of the Timpanogos Transit Authority into UTA.

TTA was set up to bring mass transit to Provo and Orem, but voters never approved the quarter-cent sales tax needed to provide local money to match federal grants.

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TTA officials have decided merging with UTA would be the best and fastest way to

bring a bus system to Provo and Orem. Both city councils have approved putting the question on the ballot.

Meanwhile, Brigham Young University President Jeffrey Holland said transportation issues are obviously important to a large institution like BYU.

"A significant percentage of our students do not own their own automobiles and depend on public transportation.

"Ancillary issues such as parking, traffic, and air pollution are also of concern to us. We appreciate having been involved in the community workshops that resulted in the transit plan. BYU is in favor of any improvements that will be of benefit to the community at large."

"It's hard for me to believe people wouldn't want mass transit," said LaVell Edwards, BYU football coach.

"I favor mass transit. It provides an opportunity for people who may not have two cars,

for the elderly, around better. As a parking problem solve."

JoAnn Losee, Jewelers, said, "Provo and Orem is extensive — on

"It's a good if people v of it, it co help ease lem downt

it and goes every tronize the business, convenient a

